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Why We Should Trust Science: World-Renowned Science Historian Naomi Oreskes to Visit RWU on April 13

Award-winning scholar and author to address the dangers of science disinformation and how the public can begin to discern competing claims



March 22, 2016 | Jill Rodrigues '05

BRISTOL, R.I. – With a cacophony of voices flooding communication channels on hot topics from smoking to global warming, it can be challenging for the average citizen to discern the true science from the spin.

On Wednesday, April 13, world-renowned science historian [Naomi Oreskes](#) will pull back the curtain on science communication as part of the President's Distinguished Speakers Series at Roger Williams University. Members of the campus community and the public are invited to spend an evening with Oreskes for a presentation titled "Why We Should Trust Science (Most of the Time)," which will examine how to think about science from a citizen's perspective and begin to discern competing claims on topics from vaccines to climate change.

With more than 100 scholarly and popular books, articles and opinion pieces to her name, Oreskes – a professor of the history of science at Harvard University – has become a leading voice in the national conversation about science disinformation. Her acclaimed book and documentary film, [Merchants of Doubt](#) (co-authored with Erik M. Conway), tackles the ways in which scientific communication and misinformation campaigns for political leverage have misled the public on serious issues from smoking to acid rain.

In 2015, Oreskes wrote the introduction to Pope Francis's encyclical on climate change and inequality, *On Care of Our Common Home*, bringing her efforts to elevate the discourse on human-caused climate change to a global audience. Her [TED Talk](#) examining why the public should trust scientists has received nearly 1 million views.

Oreskes's books have been translated into nine languages, and she has won numerous prizes and awards, including the 2014 American Geophysical Union Presidential Citation for Science and Society; the 2015 Public Service Award of the Geological Society of America; and the 2015 Herbert Feis Prize of the American Historical Association for her contributions to public history.

The April 13 presentation will take place in the School of Law Appellate Courtroom (Room 283) on the University's Bristol campus at One Old Ferry Road. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the event will begin at 7 p.m. A book signing will immediately follow the presentation. The event is free and open to the public; no tickets are required. For more information, call (401) 254-3166.

Launched in 2011, the [President's Distinguished Speakers Series](#) at Roger Williams University invites thought leaders from a wide range of disciplines to share perspectives, inspire conversations and enrich the intellectual lives of students, faculty and staff at Roger Williams as well as members of the local community.

As part of the series, each guest is invited to devote much of the daylong visit to direct engagement with students in classroom sessions, offering RWU students unique opportunities for one-on-one interactions with some of the world's leading authors, scholars, artists and public servants.